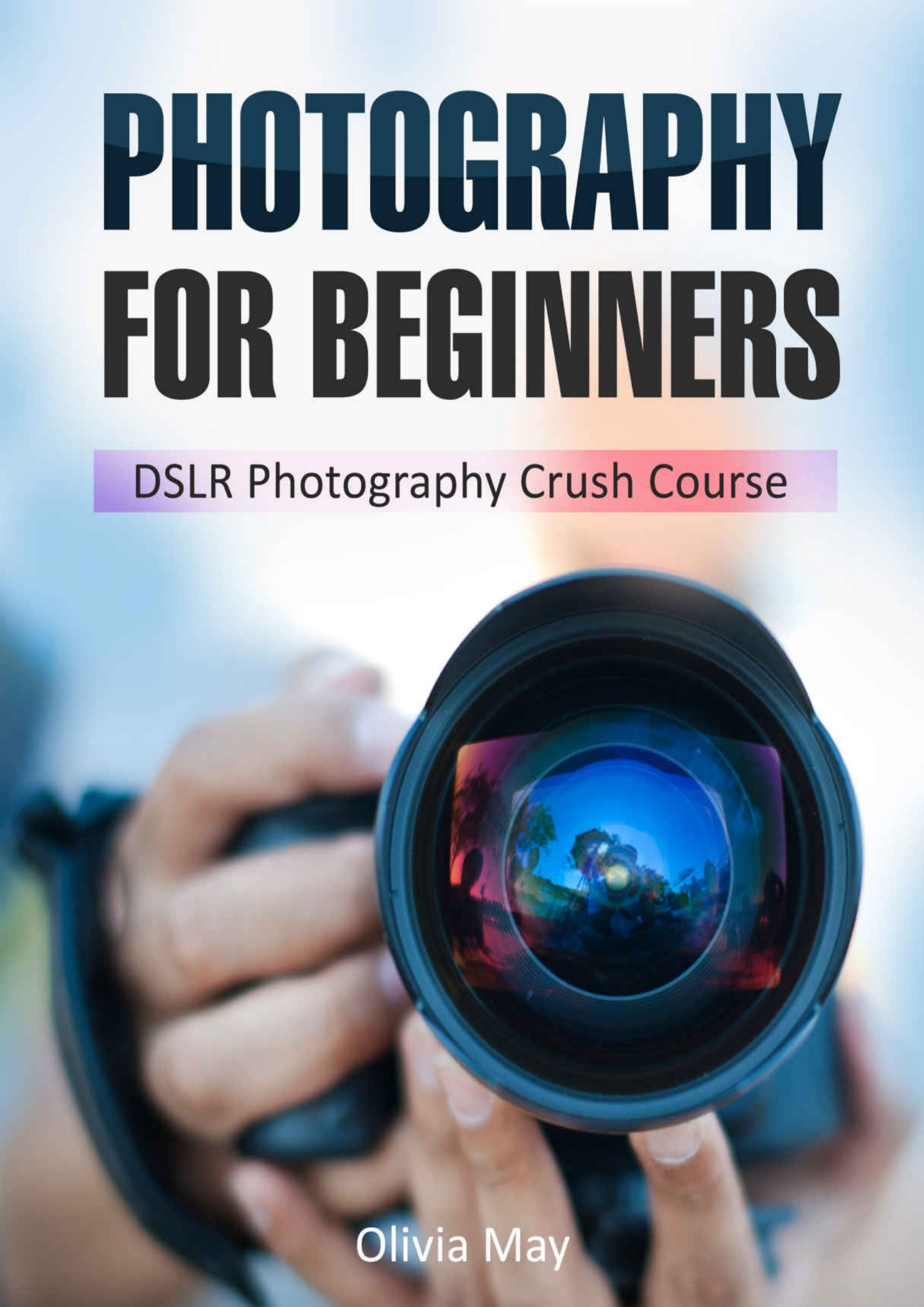
PHOTOGRAPHY FOR BEGINNERS

DSLR Photography Crush Course



Olivia May

Photography for Beginners

DSLR Photography Crush Course: Discover Secrets on How You Can Get Visually Stunning Images Using Your DSLR

(Photography, Digital Photography, Portrait, Landscape, Photoshop)

Book Description

Do you want to start a new hobby in photography? Did you just buy a DSLR camera? Or, have you had a DSLR camera for some time now, but you want to know more? Maybe you even tried your hand at photography, but want to deepen your knowledge on the topic and take better pictures? If so, then this book can help you!

Photography his one of the most popular hobbies out there, but also one that takes expertise and the right forms of education to do it well. Furthermore, photography with a DSLR camera is even more complex, with more options and even more opportunity! With your DSLR and an eagerness to make photography your next hobby, you have so many opportunities for amazing pictures and lots of fun taking them!

However, adding photography to your list of hobbies and getting that perfect shot can, at the beginning, seem overwhelming and frustrating. There are so many things to consider! Lighting, the settings on your camera, the correct focus and the right framing techniques. Furthermore, there are just so many options on a DSLR camera that you might not know where to begin! That's okay! This book is written with your worries as best interested in mind! This book will not only educate you on how to use a DSLR camera and take the very best pictures you can but also relive any stress you may be feeling about the topic! This book includes:

-An introduction to DSLR cameras and a simple explanation to what they are

-Information on the different settings of a DSLR camera and how they work

-Information on how lighting affects your our pictures and camera

-Helpful suggestions for focusing your camera on how this will impact your pictures

-Different framing techniques

-Information on different types of pictures (such as landscape, portrait, etc.) and how to go about getting the best shot of each different type

-Tips and tricks along the way to make your pictures the very best they can be!

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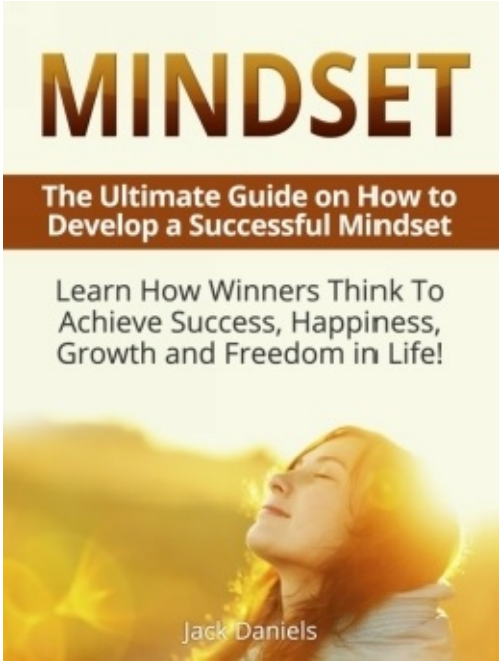

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Introduction

Welcome to your very own instructional and educational guide to photography and DSLR cameras! You have just selected a book that will greatly improve your photography skills and understanding of DSLR cameras! You should rest assured that you've made an excellent choice!

When it comes to your pictures, no matter what type of shots you prefer to commonly shoot, you want your pictures to be the very best they can be! However, if you're new to photography, DSLR cameras or both, then knowing exactly how to have amazing pictures, right away, can be difficult! There are so many different settings on a DSLR camera and so many technical things to know when it comes to getting the perfect picture. Are you new to photography? Did you just get a new DSLR camera? Or, have you had one for some time, but you feel you could use more knowledge about such a complex device? Or, do you simply want to learn how to improve your picture taking skills? If any of these options apply to you, then this book is sure to offer you a huge amount of assistance!

image by Martin Taylor

However, at this time, you may also be feeling overwhelmed, frustrated or confused. This is perfectly natural when it comes to a topic as complex as photography and a device as elaborate as a DSLR camera. Not to worry! This book I have written with your specific concerns in mind and it will work, page by page, to relieve them!

First, this book will begin with an easy to understand and straight forward introduction in chapter one into just what a DSLR camera is, how this type of camera is different from other types of cameras and how this affects you as a photographer. Then, we'll provide a straightforward introduction to very basic information on DSLR cameras, such as the location of the on/off switch, how to zoom in and out and how to use the most basic of settings. Then, in chapter two, we'll discuss, in depth, all of the different settings you will find with your DSLR camera, how each one works and how you can utilize each and every setting in the best way to get the very best pictures! Just a few of these settings will be how to adjust the shutter speed and what aperture means as well as how it affects your pictures.

Within this chapter, we'll also look at how shutter speed, aperture and metering can affect your pictures and why it's important to understand the balance between these three things. Then, in chapter three, or your last chapter, we'll give you five different tips and tricks that can help you to improve your pictures overall! These tips will include suggestions on the different times of the day that will be best for shooting specific pictures as well as how different times of the day should be avoided. These tips and tricks will also offer different ideas of where you can seek outside help for your photography and how you can improve your pictures through choosing to utilizing different tools, such as a tripod! Let's get started!

Chapter 1: What is a DSLR Camera?

There is a good chance that, for a number of readers out there, that you're starting this topic and hobby from scratch. Maybe you've just purchased a DSLR camera and you've decided to make photography your next hobby! Great! However, this may also mean you need very basic guidance and instruction to what a DSLR camera is and how it works. If so, this will be an excellent starting point for you! On the other hand, there is also a chance, you've owned a DSLR for a while now and used it a bit, so, you're not a complete beginner. However, this doesn't mean you. Have a good understanding of all the basics! Therefore, this will also be a good place for you to start! It is always a good idea to begin with the basics and lay a good foundation of understanding for yourself!

image by Avi

First, let's talk about what a DSLR camera is. By definition, a DSLR camera is a camera that is run by a digital system with a lens that is single-reflex. Unlike older cameras that ran off photography, film (for example, disposable cameras, or cameras where you bring the film into the store to get it developed), the DSLR camera uses digital technologies and sensors to take its pictures. You will, therefore, notice, there is no film with this type of camera and therefore, everything will be digital and you will look at your pictures by uploading them on your computer.

Now, let's talk about some of the major features of your camera and just a few settings, so you can have a basic understanding of how to work it. First, of course, you have the on/off button. You will see this located on the right-hand side of your camera with a round, silver button on top of it. To turn your camera on, you will simply flip the switch to "on," and you will see the digital screen on your camera light up. Then, you have the button that you press to actually take a picture. This is called the shutter-release button, or even the shutter button. This is the silver button on top of your on/off switch. As for other basic buttons to know about on your camera, you will have a set of several buttons along the side of your digital screen.

Each camera differs a bit, but, usually, the very top button has a little icon showing a piece of film and a triangle. If you press this button, you can review the pictures you've taken and overall, all the pictures on your camera! Next, with the second button down, you will have the "menu" button. Using this button, by pressing it one time, you will see a screen appear that will allow you to select many options. Just a few of the options would be selecting specific pictures for deletion, adjusting the settings (such as date and time) on your camera and settings like the shutter speed. Then, on the next button down from the "menu" button, you will see an icon that has a magnifying glass with a little plus sign in the middle of it. This button will be a button you utilize after you've already selected a picture of yours to view. Once you've selected the picture you want to view, via the top "review" button, you will then use this button to zoom in on specific parts of the picture.

The button right below this one is quite similar, however, you will notice on this button, rather than a plus sign, you instead have a little minus sign. You will use this button in a similar way as you did the last one, but this one is for zooming out on a particular picture. This is also the button you will use to select specific pictures for deletion from your camera's memory. Finally, the last button you will want to know about is the very bottom button, which should have a little "i" icon on it. This, of course, stands for "information." By pressing this button, you can receive basic information from your camera, such as what the flash and shutter settings are currently at. Any information you need to know about how your camera is currently set up to take a picture should be found here.

image by Roland Tanglao

It’s also, probably, in your best in sternest to be aware of different things like the flash, how to zoom with your camera and what the different zoom settings are. First, to turn the flash on and off, you will need to locate where this setting is. Of course, with each camera, different settings are located in different places, however, with a large majority of DSLR’s, the flash settings are located on the “wheel” on the right hand side of the camera, near the shutter button. You will see that the flash setting is the icon that looks like a small bolt of lightning with an arrow at the top. When you turn the wheel to select this icon, the flash will be on. Furthermore, then you select the flash setting and prepare to take a picture by pressing the shutter button, you will see that the flash contraption, located on the top of your camera, will pop up. You’re now ready to take a picture using flash!

To turn the flash off, you will want to fold the flash back down on top of the camera and then turn the wheel to a different setting that that flash isn’t selected. As for zoom and focus, both of which go hand in hand, there are two main options. These two options can be found on your camera lens. You will see, written in small lettering, “manual” and “automatic.” Manual focus means, that when you go to take a shot, you will simply move your lens in and out and when you do this, you will see the focus shifting.

When it’s clear and you have the shot arrangement you want, you can take the picture! On the other hand, with automatic focus, you will again, move your lens around to get the specific shot you want and then, you will see several little red dots appear in your view. You will also hear a small beeping noise. This is your camera telling you it’s focused and ready to take a picture! It should also be noted, here, that the way to zoom and focus your camera for a shot is done through moving your lens in and out. With other cameras, there are different buttons and settings you can use to do this, however, with a DSLR camera, there are simply none of these options. You will be relying solely on your lens and your automatic or manual focus.

Chapter 2: Settings for Shooting

When it comes to your DSLR camera there is one thing you may have noticed: there are a lot of settings and a lot of options! It can become quite easy to get frustrated, confused and overwhelmed. Not to worry, though! We're going to break down all the major settings for you and give you great, in depth explanations for each one!

image by Benjamin Balázs

First, we begin with a setting called Aperture Priority. You may see, that in your camera's settings, this is shown by an "A" or "AP." Basically, this setting allows you to take pictures in a "semi-automatic" setting. Meaning, you, as the person taking the photograph, choose what you want as far as an aperture goes and then, once this has been pre-determined, the camera will automatically go ahead and choose the shutter speed for you, based on what you've already selected. You may now be wondering what an aperture is. Great question! The aperture, put simply, is how wide or slim you have set your lens when taking the picture, or, how far or wide you've decided to zoom in.

For example, when you zoom in on an object while taking a picture, the hole to let light in for the shutter is very small, whereas, when you zoom outward and your frame is wide, you instead have a large hold to let light in for the shutter. When you're using the AP setting, you are selecting your zoom and then, based on this, your camera is smart enough to choose the shutter settings for you. Furthermore, aperture can be considered one of the most important things to take into consideration when it comes to photography.

If you think about it, this controls not only what you see in your picture, but also how you will see it as far as lighting and shutter speed goes. For example, you're choosing something referred to as the depth of field with this setting. This mean, how much of something-an object, a person, a landscape- will be in your picture. Will you take a picture of someone's entire body or do you just want to focus on their face? Do you want to take a picture of the entire mountain range or just a specific mountain? This the basic premise behind aperture.

The next thing you want to keep in mind is what kind of aperture to use to take different types of pictures. Basically, it depends on what you're taking a picture of. If you want to take a picture of a mountain range with a beautiful stream flowing in front of you, then you will want to use a small aperture and large depth of field. Meaning, you shoot the entire mountain range and stream, with very little focus in terms of moving your lens in and out. On the other hand, if you want to shoot, perhaps, a still object on a table, like a vase of flowers, for example, you would want to use the lens of your camera to zoom in and have a smaller depth of field, which, in turn will also create a larger aperture. The biggest benefit of using this setting is that you have a better control over your depth of field and what you want your picture to focus on the most and now having to worry about the shutter speed or other settings because your camera will do it for you!

**Tip: To focus on a specific object, like an animal and make the rest of the background softened, you can use the lens of your camera to focus in on the animal, wait for your camera to focus and then snap the picture. This will create an image where the animal is in perfect focus and the primary focus is the animal and the rest of the background is very soft.*

The next setting we're going to discuss is one called Shutter Priority, usually presented as a "TV" or "S" icon on your camera's settings. You will find that this setting is quite easy to use and that it's somewhat similar to the last setting we discussed, AP. Yet again, this setting is considered a "semi-automatic" one. However, it works exactly the opposite of the AP setting, we talked about previously. With TV, you will find that you, the photographer, set the shutter setting and your camera, based on this, then automatically takes care of the aperture setting.

Before using this setting, you will first need to know what the shutter is, how to set it and what exactly affects it. Overall, the shutter is the setting that deals with the light that enters your camera and how that will affect your picture. Furthermore, when you set the shutter speed, this speed is measured in seconds and the longer you set the shutter out stay open for, the more light will be allowed into your camera, and therefore, your overall picture. You might now be wondering when you would want to use this setting and for what pictures it might be best for. Great question!

You would want to use this setting, and play around with your shutter speed when you're photographing moving objects. For example, if you wanted to get a shot of a flying bird, you would want to set your shutter at a very, very high speed, say, 1/4,000 of a second. This would set your camera to act almost as a freeze frame and prevent the picture of the bird from coming out blurry. On the other hand, if you wanted to get a bit of a blurry picture, for example, a picture of a waterfall pouring over some rocks, you would want to use a very high shutter speed. This would blur the water rushing over the rocks. So, remember, when using this setting and when playing with your shutter speed in general, you will want to use a long shutter speed to blur objects, whereas, if you want to "freeze" objects during movement, then use a very fast shutter speed.

Next, is manual mode. This setting is, well, exactly what it says in the name! With this setting, you have complete control as the photographer! Meaning, you would set the shutter speed as well as the aperture all on your own for each specific picture you want to shoot. That being said, when you go to shoot a picture after making your own adjustments, there will still be an indicator, in your viewfinder (the little square you look through when taking a picture) that will give you an alert as to how overexposed or underexposed your picture will be. Basically, with this setting you have free reign to make your own adjustments and play around with your camera and pictures!

image by daveoratox

Tip: If you want to get a taste for how much creativity and fun you can have with your camera, then this is a great way to try it out! With this setting, you can learn very quickly how the shutter speed and aperture works on your camera and how this affects your pictures! If you want to learn more about these settings and be able to play around with them, then try manual mode!

The ISO setting is now the next setting we're going to cover! First, most important is to discuss just what ISO is and how it affects your camera. ISO is the setting on your camera, that you can adjust to make your device more or less sensitive to the light. This setting, interspersing lay enough, derived originally from film and video cameras and how different lighting conditions and, now, the same thing applies to digital photography through DSLRs. When playing with this setting and choosing a specific setting, you will notice that you can choose from setting numbers 100-6400. 100 is the lowest sensitivity and 6400 would therefore be the highest sensitivity.

Let's look at two scenarios to help you better understand what ISO is and how to correctly use it. First, let's say you want to shoot a field of tulips on a bright sunny day. Since it's so sunny outside, there will be lots of sunshine and, therefore, light, coming into your camera. Since there is so much light, you won't need to set your ISO at a high level, or sensitivity, because there is already so much light available to it. On the other hand, say you want to photograph a museum or a cathedral.

Usually, in these places you will find a smaller source of light available to you and it may even be quite dark. In this case, you would set your ISO at a higher number so that your camera could work to multiply the light that is available and make a decent exposure for your photograph. You see, from this example, that basically, ISO works to take what light is available and, in a sense, multiply it through the setting to make as much light as possible and therefore, an acceptable exposure for your pictures! Just a few simple guidelines to follow as far as settings go is to try a setting of ISO200 if it's bright and sunny outside. If it begins to get cloudy or is it's generally an overcast day, then maybe try a setting of ISO800. If it's getting dark outside, or it's quite dim in the location you're shooting, then try a much higher settings of ISO4000. Of course, every photographer and every shot are different, so feel free to play around with the different settings and try new things!

The Exposure Triangle

When it comes to taking notes, pictures, you, of course, want the very best exposure you can get to have the very best picture. There are three things that are crucial to getting the best exposure possible: aperture, shutter speed and ISO. You always want to work to keep these three things in a proper setting that's going to benefit you the most and you also want to ensure the three are always balanced, depending on your shooting conditions. Furthermore, these three different settings make up something called the exposure triangle. These three things are crucial because there control things that greatly affect your pictures: the amount of light your camera needs for proper exposure and the amount of light taken in by your camera. Since these three things are linked, it's important for you to understand how they work and especially how they all work together for you to have proper control over your camera and therefore, your pictures. Let's take a look at a specific example so that you can better understand how these settings work together and how you can use them to the best of your ability.

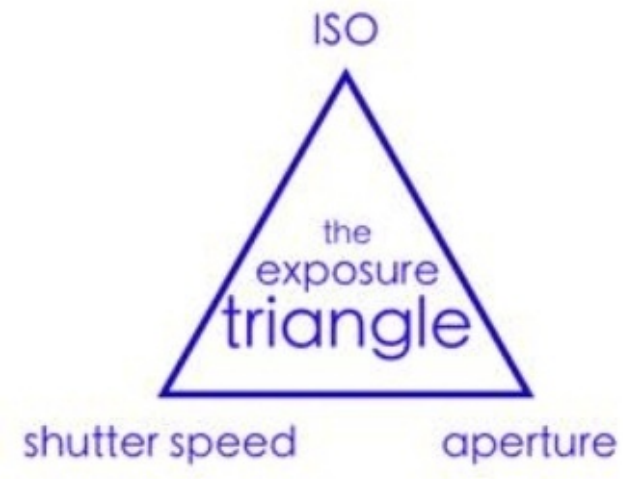

image by Michael Hernandez

Let's say, for example, you have your camera set at ISO300, your aperture at f7.0 and your shutter speed at 1/8th of a second. Now, say you want to change your depth of field by making it smaller (in other words,focusing in on a small point in your frame). This means, you will first have to change your aperture. So, for example, you drop your aperture setting down to f4.0. Can you just leave the other settings as they were? No! This is because, by reducing your aperture, you've also increased the amount of light that will be allowed into the camera by six times! So, you have to adjust the other settings to allow for this, otherwise, your exposure is completely off. To make these setting adjustments, you can, perhaps, change your shutter speed to be reduced by six times, therefore moving it from 1/8 of a second to 1/25 of a second, for example.

Now, you will also want to adjust your ISO setting. For example, you could take it from ISO300 to ISO150. You will notice, between the ISO settings and the shutter speed settings, we split the difference of the light between the two. So, you will note that in the original change in aperture, you changed the depth of field by about four times, therefore, between ISO and your shutter speed, you should divide this change, rather than reducing each setting by four times. Overall, you see here, that when you change one setting, you must change the other two as well, to balance things out.

Metering

Another important setting, especially when it comes to understanding exposure is one called metering. Throughout this book, so far, we've talked a lot about exposure and how it affects your pictures, but you may still be wondering, how does your camera calculates exposure and how does this process work? Great question! Basically, when your camera is looking at and taking in a specific shot, it's calculating the different areas of light. It's taking into consideration the lighter areas and on the other hand, the dimmer areas to make one, overall picture. When your camera is looking at all of these light situations and trying to make a proper exposure, it's attempting to find something called the middle gray area, which is your camera converting the light into an 18% gray range to work out the proper exposure throughout the entire image. For example, if you take a picture, outside, on a bright sunny day with, say, bright white snow on the ground, then you will notice the picture will be darker than it looks through the naked eye. On the other hand, if you take a picture in a darker area, perhaps a cave with little light source, the picture will always be brighter than the image you envisioned. This is your camera finding the middle gray area!

image by Steve Rainwater

That being said, you should know you can also control the metering on your camera and choose specific settings to have the very best results for your pictures! Overall, there are three basic ways and settings you can choose to do this. The first, being a setting called average. With this option, you're essentially setting your camera up to look at the picture for a while, from one end to the other, through the viewfinder and from there, create an 18% gray area exposure for the entire picture. Your second option is a setting called Center-weight. If you choose this, you may have guessed, judging by the name, that your camera will focus from the very center of the picture up until the point where it reaches looking at 80% of the image. Then, using this portion of what's in the viewfinder (it will basically ignore the other 20% of the picture) and the amount of light in this portion, it will create a balanced exposure. Finally, your third option is one called spot metering. If you decide to choose this setting, your camera will focus on the very center of the image in your viewfinder. The average amount of focus will usually be about 5% of the shot. From what your camera sees as far as light in this portion of the picture, it will take this into consideration and then, based on this assessment, expose the entire picture.

You can see, here, that there are pros and cons to each different setting. For the first setting, the largest portion of the picture, in this case, all of it, will be taken into consideration, however the average 18% of the gray area expose simply may not do the shot justice. On the other hand, you have the second option, where a large amount of the shot is still taken into consideration, however, since only the center 80% is taken in by this setting, there may still be things left out. For example, what if the center of your shot is quite dark and most of the sunlight is contained in the corners of your shot? This would mean the natural light doesn't take into consideration at all. Finally, with the last setting, by only taking 5% of the shot into consideration before creating the exposure, this may not be enough sunlight to create the shot you want. So, that being said, it becomes clear that you should take these things into consideration when adjusting these different settings. You will have to think about where your natural light is in terms of what you're seeing through your viewfinder as well as where the darkest areas of your picture is.

Tip: If you're at the very beginner stage in your photography, you will probably want to stick with the average or center-weighted settings as this will give you the best amount of consistency in your photographs and also be the easiest to use.

Next, let's talk about yet another setting, this time, one called exposure compensation. This is one of the most popular and the easiest way to use the settings on your camera, mostly, because it's easy to locate and easy to adjust! You will find this setting as the icon that has a white plus sign against a black backdrop and on the other half, a black minus sign against a white backdrop. This button and icon have been usually, but not always, found near the on/off switch to your camera. Overall, by pressing this button you can increase or decrease the meter reading on your camera that affects the overall brightness of your photos. So, for example, if a specific picture you're trying to take, that has a large amount of light available and is therefore turning out too dark for you, you will then want to press this button to decrease the meter reading. On the other hand, if you're shooting an image that is darker and the result is coming out too light, then you will want to increase your meter reading by pressing this button. You will find, that, overall this will be your best and easiest bet for adjusting your exposure if you're very new to photography and want to begin with small steps!

Focusing

When it comes to taking photos, one of the most important things you will want to know about it how to properly focus your camera! It's probably easy enough to say that if you don't know how to do this, you probably won't have vary many impressive pictures! First, let's talk about a few different auto-focus settings and how they work!

First, you have an auto-focus mode called AF-S, which stands for auto-focus single. This mode will be best to use when you want to take pictures of stationary things, like a vase of flowers or an apple. To use this setting, simply get what you want in your viewfinder, press the shutter button down half-way, until you hear it give a small beep and then press it down all the way to take the picture.

image by s58y

The second setting is called AF-C, or auto-focus continuous. When using this mode, you will want to be shooting something, an object or a person, that's moving. For example, a boy playing basketball or a deer running through a field. You can use this setting by, of course, selecting it, getting your shot in your viewfinder, half-pressing the shutter button, waiting for the camera to focus (the small beeping noise) and then pressing the shutter button all the way down to complete the process of taking the picture. This setting works by focusing on the moving now object-even when it's moving! What's nice about this setting is that, even when your camera is focus in, it can and will still stay focused despite the movement of whatever object you're shooting!

It should also be noted here, that to assist you when you're trying to focus your camera and take a picture, there will also be focus points in your viewfinder. This is just another way that your camera lets you know it's focused and ready to take a picture. You will see these focus points as little dots, usually 9, through your viewfinder when you're looking through it. You will notice, as well, that when you press the shutter button half way down and hold it here, these dots will turn red when your camera beeps. These two things mean that your camera is focused and ready to take the picture! Furthermore, there are many options you can use and settings you can select to make several different focus points through your viewfinder. On the newest of DSLRs there can be several different focus points at one time shown, however, if you're just beginning and want to start out with the basics, it will probably be easiest for you to learn if you set your camera to have one focus point, in the center of the viewfinder. Usually, your camera will came already set up like this.

File Size

When it comes to taking pictures, there is a good chance you will want to get your fantastic pictures from your camera to your computer or some type of similar electronic device. To do this, the file size and the file type come into consideration. It will be important for you to be able to and to know how to change these settings so that you can store and manage your pictures in the easiest way possible! Of course, these settings will also affect the overall quality of your pictures. There are a few different settings you can choose to make the file size and the types of files your pictures are stored under the most beneficial to you in your overall photography experience.

First, it's in your best interest to choose the largest file size option. The name of this setting can obviously differ from camera to camera. Sometimes the setting can be just "large," whereas other times, it might be "fine." Other cameras might even have the setting as "super fine." You will want to choose the largest size available in your camera's options and then you will also need to select the file type. In a large majority of the cameras, the options are usually "jpeg," or "raw." Before choosing one of these certain items, let's first discuss what each of them are. With the raw image type, you will have pictures that are uncompressed and therefore, this will give you a lot of flexibility when you go to, say, upload them to your computer.

On the other hand, if you choose the jpeg setting, your camera will automatically compress the pictures and this means, they will be, for example, ready to upload to a computer and print immediately. An image saved as a jpeg will also take up less space than an image that's been set as "raw," so, essentially, you'll be able to save more pictures on your camera, SIM card or computer this way! Overall, if you're a complete beginner and you want to make life as easy as possible for yourself in terms of settings and managing your pictures, then the jpeg option is probably best for you!

White Balance

Now, if you've decided to select the jpeg option for your picture type, you will also want to understand something called the white balance. This is something you'll want to select and set up before you begin taking pictures once you've selected jpeg mode. The white balance is something that greatly impacts your pictures as far as the coloring of them goes. For example, you may notice that some of your pictures turn out with a bluish or an orangish tint to them. Of course, this is not how they should look. Adjusting the white balance will help with this and ensure the color in your pictures represents how the image looks to the naked eye. Overall, there are six different options you can choose to make sure you can capture pictures with the correct colors in them.

The first setting is one called daylight and based on its name, it's quite self-explanatory. You will want to choose this setting if it's a bright sunny day outside. Second, is a setting called cloudy. Again, this option is very straightforward. You will, obviously, want to use this setting on a day when's it's cloudy or overcast outside as it will give your pictures warmers tones and enhance them a bit. Third, you have an option called shade, which, should be used in, you guessed it, shaded areas.

This is an important option because in shaded areas, there will be lots of cool colors and tones that will look better in the overall pictures, if a bit of warm tones are also added. Now, for the fourth setting, you can also choose Tungsten. This option will benefit you and your pictures most when you're taking pictures in a setting that had a lot of yellow tones. For example, under direct, superficial lighting or street lights. This setting will work to take the yellow tones in your pictures down a notch or two and make things look more natural. Another setting that will work great for you, especially when taking pictures indoors is the Florescent setting.

Just as the name states, if you're shooting from, under or within spitting distance of Florescent lights, then this setting will reduce the blue/green hues coming from these lights and even things out for your shots. Finally, of course, you have the flash option. This setting should be used to add blue hues as well as warm colors to your pictures. Lastly, something you will also want to keep in mind when it comes to these settings, is that you should choose to utilize them rather than just putting your camera on auto white balance. It's easy enough, even as a beginner, to look outside or in the location you're taking your pictures and assess what setting will work best to improve your pictures. Deciding on these different settings and selecting one is quite simple and furthermore, it will help you learn. So, try to rely on assessing and selecting settings rather than relying on the auto settings.

Chapter 3: Five Tricks to Improve Your Overall Photography

Now, in your third and final chapter in your very own guide to understand DSLR cameras and shooting the very best photography you can, we're going to discuss five different tricks you can use to improve your pictures overall! Although many of these might seem self-explanatory or even obvious, keep in mind that these tips are also things that are often overlooked, even by the most experienced photographers. Therefore, don't forget to remember the basics and let's start there!

Your very first tip is to practice, practice, practice! The most pictures you take, the most pictures you have to look at and manage and finally, the more often you look at the different settings your camera has to offer and play with them, the more you'll learn about photography! Photography may not seem like something you can necessarily "practice," however, this is simply not true. You can practice by taking pictures, usually of the same thing, multiple times and with each different shot, adjusting different settings and options with your camera. This will help you out to figure out and decide what your favorite settings are and give you real-life examples of how different settings affect your camera and therefore, your pictures.

You will also want to note that it's not only important to get experience taking pictures with different settings, but also, taking pictures at different times and with different conditions. For example, in the evening and early morning when the lighting conditions are different. On the other hand, you can practice taking pictures in dim lighting and bright lighting. You can also choose different things to shoot. For example, maybe for one week, you choose to shoot only people and portraits and improve on those shots. Then, maybe another week, you choose landscapes and try to improve on that type of picture. Overall, here, you want to focus on getting as much practice at taking as many different pictures as possible!

Secondly, it will also help you learn if you visit places like zoos, botanical gardens, butterfly gardens and other such places to practice different shots, for example, actions shots, different lighting situations, different framing techniques and how to adjust the settings in your camera to benefit your pictures the most. Furthermore, you can also use the stationary objects, like flowers, to practice difference focusing and framing techniques as well as how to soften or make your pictures extra fine. This tip is great for two reasons. On one hand, you have a great opportunity to practice and on the other hand, you won't have to worry about things like rain, snow and man-made objects being in the way of your shot!

image by Stephen Harris

Yet another way you can improve your photography skills and overall photographs, is to join a class! This can open so many positive doors for you! First, this is a very economical way to learn more about the hobby of photography. Usually, photography classes are either free or very inexpensive. Secondly, you will gain some type of instruction and help through this class. Of course, with each class and teacher, you will have different degrees of instruction and experience, but, nonetheless, you will have the opportunity to learn more. Also, you'll be with others who are trying to learn and different experience levels.

When it comes to this, there will be many different opinions, suggestions and tips being shared within the class. This can also help you learn many things! Lastly, taking a class like this can also open more doors and opportunities for you that you might not have expected. For example, maybe you will meet a fellow photography who owns his or her own business and they offer you the chance to shadow them and watch them in action. This would be a great learning opportunity for you! Overall, even if you feel like you may not necessarily *need* to take a class like this, keep in mind, you have nothing to lose and everything to gain and learn! In some way, you will end up benefitting from this chance!

Your fourth tip to learning to take better pictures and have proper control over your DSLR camera is to invest in a tripod. Although there are some tripods out there that might be quite expensive, there is still a good chance you can find one within your budget. Furthermore, if you're questioning if you *really* need something like this to actually improve your photography, the answer is absolutely yes! A tripod can benefit you in a whole list of ways! First, if you find that many of your pictures are coming out shaky or even a little bit blurry, then using a tripod to steady yourself and your pictures will help significantly! Furthermore, if you enjoy shooting landscapes, or this is an area where you really want to improve, then a tripod can do nothing but positive things for you! Usually, when you shoot landscapes, it's vital for your camera to stay steady and fixed in one place.

At times, especially if the landscape required a lot a zooming in, this can be challenging. Therefore, a tripod can offer you some assistance! Yet another way a tripod can help you is when you want to shoot in low-light situations. Even the slightest bit of movement in low-light source cons idiots can create blurry images and uneven coloring in your pictures. With a tripod though, this wouldn't be an issue! A tripod would come, especially in handy, in this case, for pictures involving sunsets, shots of city lights and landscapes at dusk. Furthermore, if you've ever wanted to get shots of, say, the stars or moon, this is nearly impossible without a tripod since you will have to adjust the shutter speed to be very, very slow and therefore, you will need assistance holding the camera still for instances like this.

image by Sherman Geronimo-Tan

You very last tip is also an important one! When trying to improve your overall photography skills and therefore, your pictures, you will want to choose the best possible time to take pictures. This means aiming to take pictures during the early morning and also later in the afternoon. Shooting at a time in the day, for example, high noon, will bring you conditions with harsh and direct sunlight. Although, this of course, give you plenty of opportunity for light in your pictures, there is a such thing as too much light. Furthermore, shooting in direct sunlight and overly sunny conditions will also create annoying things to think about like shadows and orange or blue sun spots in your pictures.

When shooting in the early morning and late afternoon, you will be able to get softer, more natural lighting conditions that will allow you to shoot better quality pictures while also playing less and less with your camera settings. On the other hand, if you're going to shoot and improve at landscape photos, you will want to be in place just before sunrise or just before sunset. These times will give you the best lighting conditions. Then, when it comes to getting the best portrait shots, you will want to aim for two hours after the sun has risen and two hours after the sun has set. You will find that these times are often what professional photographers choose and these times are highly suggested.

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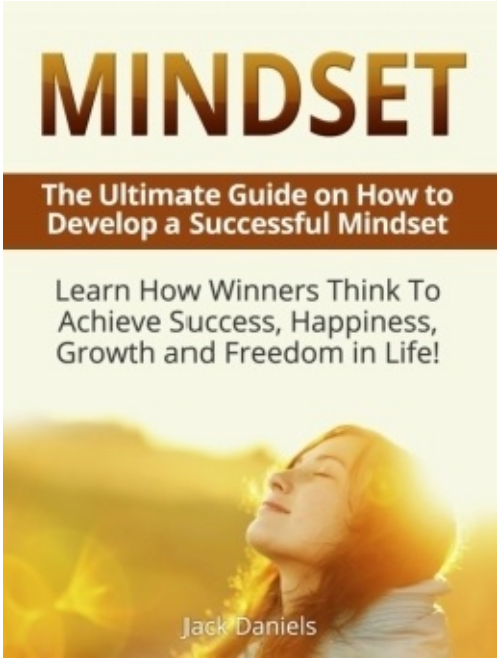

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Conclusion

Congratulations! You've made it! You have now completed an entire book that has not only educated and informed you on DSLR cameras, it's different settings and how this type of camera works but this book has also provided you with many overall tips and tricks that you can use to get started in photography and improve your pictures! In such a short time and in just three short chapters, you've learned so much! You should be very proud of yourself!

If you think back to when you first began this book, you may realize how different things were at this time. There is a good chance you were feeling stressed, overwhelmed, confused or even frustrated! These emotions and feeling may have stemmed from a lack of knowledge on the topic or maybe struggling to keep up with a photography class that you'd joined before reading this book. There is even a chance you were completely new to the topic and the hobby of photography and you needed to start from the very beginning. It may even be possible that you had tried to use other sources of information and this just wasn't cutting it. Whatever the source of your confusion or frustration was, this book solved it and then some!

First, to put your worries to rest, this book began with a very basic introduction to what a DSLR camera was, and the very basic settings you would need to know about to use one. We also explained how this camera is different from other types of cameras. Then, in chapter two, we went through the most common and widely used settings a DSLR camera has to offer. With each and every one, we discussed how the setting worked, where you might find it, how it worked and how it might affect your pictures. Within this chapter, we also offered you several tips and tricks you could use in relation to the different settings and when it would be best to use them.

Then, finally, in a third and final chapter, we offered you five major suggestions as to how you could best improve your pictures. These helpful tips ranged anywhere from what specific times of the day to take your pictures to what other tools, like a tripod you could use to stabilize your pictures to even different locations that you could utilize to help you get lots of practice taking pictures!

From all of this information, you now have all the education you need to move forward in your pursuits of photography and using a DSLR camera! You're sure to have an excellent experience with your camera and you now have a wide range of suggestions as to how you can not only use your camera but also how you can control it for the absolute best pictures! Best of luck and happy shooting!